



TALKING POINTS FOR PRIVATELY FUNDED PROGRAMS

KEY MESSAGES TO SHARE WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

Inadequate federal funding in Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 presents a serious threat to every Meals on Wheels program across the country – **not just to those who rely on federal funds**. That is why it is so critical that the nationwide network comes together and urges Congress to increase federal funding by \$92 million (10%) in FY 2021. Below are several key messages you can share with your elected officials if you are a privately funded program:

- Nearly 9.5 million seniors are threatened by hunger.¹ With the senior (age 60+) population set to reach 118 million by 2060 – more than double the number in 2010 – this trend will only continue if left unaddressed.²
- My program is completely privately funded; however, if a federally funded program in my area can no longer count on adequate federal sources, we will both be left to compete for the same pool of limited private sources. About 2% of private philanthropy is given to aging issues, further underscoring that private dollars alone will not make up the losses of federal support.³
- If federally funded programs in my area are forced to cut back on services and turn away clients due to lack of adequate funding, neighboring programs like mine will need to find a way to provide for those clients, or risk them going without necessary nutrition and services. This places further strain on our own resources at the same time that costs to operate a Meals on Wheels program are increasing.
- Waiting lists for Meals on Wheels programs – both privately and federally funded – are growing longer and the seniors on them are among our nation’s most vulnerable. Those waiting for Meals on Wheels are significantly more likely to report poorer health, screen positive for depression and report recent falls.⁴

At this critical juncture, when both the need and demand for nutritious meals are substantial and growing, we must make the needs of our country’s most vulnerable and isolated seniors a higher priority. When any funds leave the system, a chain reaction is set into motion that strains privately and federally funded programs alike, along with the seniors we serve. Our nation can either invest a little in senior nutrition now or spend much more on the negative consequences later.

¹ Ziliak and Gunderson, 2019, *The State of Senior Hunger in America in 2017* (report prepared for Feeding America), <https://www.feedingamerica.org/research/senior-hunger-research/senior>

² U.S. Census Bureau, 2017, *National Population Projections*, <https://census.gov/data/tables/2017/demo/popproj/2017-summary-tables.html>

³ American Society on Aging (ASA), 2015, “Engaging Private Philanthropy in Aging: It’s Time for a New Approach” (analysis by J. Feather on the ASA Generations blog), <https://www.asaging.org/blog/engaging-private-philanthropy-aging-its-time-new-approach>

⁴ Thomas and Dosa, 2015, *More Than a Meal Pilot Research Study* (report prepared for Meals on Wheels America), <https://www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/learn-more/research/more-than-a-meal/pilot-research-study>